United Nations S/2007/148

Security Council

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14 March 2007

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Letter dated 14 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you a copy of the concept paper for the Security Council open debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council open debate is to be held on 28 March 2007.

(*Signed*) Dumisani S. **Kumalo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa

07-27072 (E) 160307

Annex to the letter dated 14 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept paper on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security

On 28 March 2007, the South African delegation will launch a thematic debate in the Security Council exploring the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Objective

1. The recent Summit of the African Union meeting in Addis Ababa recalled that "the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council and called upon the United Nations to examine, within the context of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peacekeeping operations undertaken by African Union or under its authority and with the consent of the United Nations".

2. The South African delegation will use its presidency to launch a discussion of the unique role the Security Council could play in the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in the maintenance of international peace and security. The aim would be to develop a framework for further engagement in this regard.

Background

3. On 9 December 1994, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Arrangements or Agencies in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security. (Resolution 49/57).

4. In April 2003, the Security Council held a meeting on "The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security".

5. During 2004 the Security Council recognized the importance of the cooperation with regional organizations, where appropriate, in two presidential statements: S/PRST/2004/27 and S/PRST/2004/44.

6. On 20 July 2004, the Security Council met to consider "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes". Members recalled that Articles 52 and 53 of the Charter of the United Nations set forth the contribution of regional organizations to the settlement of disputes, as well as the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations. (S/PRST/2004/27).

7. On 19 November 2004, the Security Council meeting in Nairobi addressed the institutional relationship between the United Nations and the African Union, including the collective efforts to resolve African conflicts and to promote sustainable peace, development, and stability. (S/PRST/2004/44).

8. The Security Council has welcomed the Constitutive Act of the African Union, welcomed the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council and expressed its support for an early ratification of the Peace and Security Protocol by all African States and the establishment of an African Standby Force and an early warning system in Africa. The completion of these efforts would allow for better coordination of regional mechanisms to foster peace and security, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty in Africa, as set forth in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). (S/PRST/2004/44).

9. The Security Council recognized the importance of strengthening cooperation with the African Union in order to help build its capacity to deal with collective security challenges, including through the African Union's undertaking of rapid and appropriate responses to emerging crisis situations, and the development of effective strategies for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. (S/PRST/2004/44).

10 The Security Council particularly welcomed the leading role of the African Union in efforts to settle crises in the African continent and expressed its full support for the peace initiatives conducted by the African Union, and through subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other regional agreements committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa. The Security Council underlined the importance of being kept fully informed, consistent with Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations. (S/PRST/2004/44).

11. The Security Council welcomed the strengthening of practical cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, as demonstrated in the case of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS II) and the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), to support and enhance the management and operational capacities of the African Union in the field of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. (S/PRST/2004/44).

12. The Security Council further invited the Secretary-General to explore, in close consultation with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, new means of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, especially taking into consideration the expanded mandate and the new organs of the African Union. (S/PRST/2004/44).

13. The World Summit Outcome has also recognized the important contribution of regional organizations to international peace and security and the importance of forging predictable partnerships and arrangements between the United Nations and regional organizations and, in this regard, supported the development and implementation of a 10-year plan for capacity-building with the African Union.

Underlying motivation

14. The current peace and security challenges addressed by the African Union have raised new questions regarding the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union. Central among them is arriving at an understanding on how to strengthen the relationship between the Security Council, as an organ bestowed with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and regional organizations, particularly the African Union Peace and Security Council.

15. Regional organizations play an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Forging close and predictable relationships and arrangements between regional organizations and the United Nations, is important in enhancing international peace and security. There are obvious advantages in the interventions of regional groups, such as proximity to the areas of conflicts.

16. The African Union initiated its own missions in Burundi, Darfur and recently in Somalia. In some cases subregional organizations such as ECOWAS also played a leading role in the resolution of conflicts. In the case of Burundi the African Union intervened at a time when it was not possible for the United Nations to deploy a peacekeeping mission.

17. It has also been experienced that United Nations interventions have sometimes taken a longer time to operationalize even after they have been authorized by the Security Council.

18. Beyond the deployment of peacekeeping forces the African Union has also led several peacemaking and mediation efforts in the continent such as those in Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda.

19. All these are efforts aimed directly at the maintenance of international peace and security.

20. A dynamic interaction between the United Nations and the African Union has also been evident as some of the decisions of the African Union in this respect have been taken into account in the work of the Security Council.

21. Further action by the African Union has, however, been hampered by lack of resources as has been evident most recently in the case of Darfur.

22. When the African Union deploys its troops into a conflict area, it does so in the maintenance of international peace and security. The central challenge for the Security Council is how to meet its responsibility and obligation in such cases.

The challenge for collective security

- How far should the Security Council go in recognizing the decisions taken by regional groups that are complementary to its work?
- What is the scope for the Security Council to incorporate outcomes of bodies such as the African Union Peace and Security Council in its own decisions?
- How can the United Nations strengthen its support to regional organizations such as the African Union in the maintenance of international peace and security and what does this mean in practical terms?
- Is there scope for the further and more direct resources support by the United Nations to regional organizations?
- What other forms of direct partnerships are possible between the United Nations and regional organizations?
- How have previous Security Council decisions and recommendations in this area been implemented? What have been the challenges and constraints with implementation and how can these be overcome?

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General Assembly
Security Council

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15 March 2007

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 27
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 12 March 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as a representative of the country coordinator of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova), I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by GUAM on the so-called elections held in Abkhazia, Georgia, on 11 February and 4 March 2007 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 27, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Viktor **Kryzhanivskyi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

07-27112 (E) 160307

Annex to the letter dated 12 March 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by GUAM on the so-called elections held in Abkhazia, Georgia, on 11 February and 4 March 2007

The GUAM member States once again express their deep concern over the so-called local and parliamentary elections held by the separatist regime of Abkhazia, Georgia, on 11 February and 4 March 2007.

It is noteworthy that these spurious elections were accompanied by the repressive acts of the Sokhumi separatist regime, such as threatening the local population, forcing them to participate in the illegal voting, opening fire at a group of Georgian and Abkhaz young persons peacefully protesting against so-called elections, kidnapping and unlawfully arresting three protesters.

We stress once again that elections in any region of Georgia should be carried out in accordance with the legislation of Georgia and with the direct participation of the entire population of the respective region. It is well known that the overwhelming majority of the peaceful population of the region of various ethnic origins was subject to mass expulsion from the places of their permanent residence. Thus, it is obvious that any kind of so-called elections carried out under such conditions are devoid of any legitimate basis and its results shall be considered a priori invalid by the whole international community, as has been done in the recent statements of the European Union and the United States.

Any kind of reference to the legitimacy of these spurious elections is immoral and cynical as an attempt to neglect the right of refugees and to legitimize results of ethnic cleansing.

The GUAM member States insistently urge the separatist regime to engage constructively in a direct dialogue with the Georgian Government and cease all unlawful activities against the peace process.

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Security Council

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26 March 2007

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 27
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-second year

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(*Signed*) Viktor **Kryzhanivskyi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

07-27112* (E) 260307

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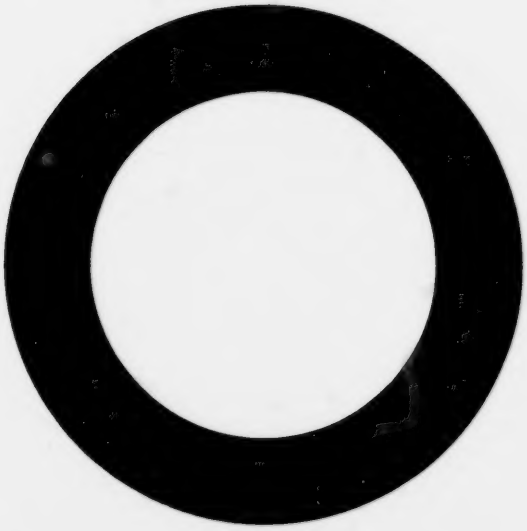

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Security Council

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15 March 2007

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Letter dated 15 March 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the seventh report of the International Independent Investigation Commission, which was prepared pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1644 (2005) and 1686 (2006).

The report describes progress made by the Commission since its previous report dated 12 December 2006 (S/2006/962) in investigating the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 other victims, and in providing technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of a number of other attacks perpetrated in Lebanon since 1 October 2004.

The present report provides information on the Commission's progress in the investigation of the Hariri case, with particular emphasis on developing crime scene leads and collecting evidence relating to perpetrators as well as linkage and contextual aspects of the case. The Commission also continued to provide significant technical assistance on 15 other cases, pursuing possible linkages between these and the Hariri case. It has also worked in conjunction with the Lebanese authorities on the investigation of the 13 February 2007 bombings, in which three people were killed and at least 20 people were injured when two explosions occurred on two buses travelling through the village of Ain Alaq, near Beirut.

I wish to take this opportunity to express thanks to Commissioner Brammertz for his leadership and to the staff of the Commission for their dedication and commitment in often demanding circumstances.

I also wish to thank the Government of Lebanon for its enduring cooperation with, and support for, the Commission. In addition, I would like to welcome the request of the Lebanese Government transmitted in Prime Minister Siniora's letter of 21 February 2007 for a further extension of the mandate of the Commission for a period of up to one year, from 15 June 2007.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council. Meanwhile, I am transmitting the report to the Government of Lebanon.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon

07-27088 (E) 190307

Seventh report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1644 (2005) and 1686 (2006)

Serge Brammertz
Commissioner

Beirut
March 2007

Summary

The Security Council, in its resolution 1644 (2005) of 15 December 2005, requested the International Independent Investigation Commission to report to it on its progress, including on the cooperation received from the Syrian authorities, every three months.

The present report summarizes the progress made by the Commission in its investigative activities since the last report to the Council (S/2006/962). During the reporting period, the Commission remained focused on its primary objective in the investigation of the Hariri case and provided technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities in 16 other cases, including the assassination of Minister Pierre Gemayel and, most recently, the Ain Alaq bombings of February 2007.

In the Hariri case, the Commission has made progress in collecting new evidence and in expanding the forms of evidence collected. This has enabled the Commission to narrow its focus in a number of areas during the reporting period, particularly in relation to establishing the motive behind the execution of the crime.

The Commission continues to maintain a close working relationship with Lebanese authorities on all matters relevant to its mandate. The Commission also continues to receive responses to its requests to other Member States, including the Syrian Arab Republic. This cooperation remains an important component of the Commission's work.

Since the last report, the political and security environment in and around Lebanon has remained unstable. The Commission continues to monitor the political situation in the region and its potential impact on its investigations and requirements for its security.

In the light of the current and planned investigative activities, it is unlikely that the Commission will complete its work before its current mandate expires in June 2007. The Commission therefore welcomes the request for an extension of its mandate beyond that date.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1644 (2005) of 15 December 2005, in which the Council requested the International Independent Investigation Commission to report every three months to the Council on the progress of its inquiry and on international cooperation, including the cooperation received from the Syrian authorities.

2. This report, the seventh report of the Commission, provides an update of issues covered in previous reports to the Council and notes progress in the work of the Commission since the last report, of 12 December 2006 (S/2006/962). As outlined in earlier reports, the Commission remains mindful of its obligation to protect the confidentiality of its investigations in order to ensure the integrity of the legal process and to protect those who have cooperated with the Commission. This approach is taken in full agreement with the Lebanese judicial authorities. Hence the present report provides an overview of activities undertaken in the reporting period rather than a detailed account of ongoing investigations.

3. Since the last report, the security environment in and around Lebanon has remained unstable, as illustrated by the bombings of two buses in the village of Ain Alaq, near Beirut, which resulted in the death of three people and injuries to 20 others on 13 February 2007. Also, discussions about the creation of a special tribunal for Lebanon remain at the top of the political agenda in Lebanon and in the region. The Commission therefore continues to monitor these issues for potential impact on its investigation activities and requirements for its security.

4. As in the past, the Commission maintains a close working relationship with Lebanese authorities on all matters relevant to its mandate. During the reporting period, the Commission also received extensive and timely assistance from a number of other States in a wide range of substantive areas. The Commission also continues to receive responses from the Syrian Arab Republic, which provides information and facilitates interviews with individuals located on Syrian territory. This cooperation remains an important component of the Commission's work.

5. The Commission has remained focused on its primary objective: the investigation of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 22 others. It has made progress in collecting new evidence and in expanding the forms of evidence collected. This is done to enhance case knowledge and corroborate existing information. This approach has enabled the Commission to narrow its focus in a number of areas, in particular in relation to developing its understanding of the motive behind the execution of the crime.

6. Following requests from the Security Council, the Commission has been providing technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities for the 14 other cases, the case of the assassination of Minister Pierre Gemayel and, more recently, the Ain Alaq bombings. In doing so, the Commission has sought to identify areas of work where it can add value to the investigations, while expending appropriate resources to achieve the required results. The objective remains to assist in each individual case, while identifying possible linkages between them.

7. The forensic programme of the Commission continues to form a particularly important component of the investigative work in support of all cases. Further corroboration of findings through forensic work was achieved during the reporting

period, and a number of new tasks were undertaken. With that in mind, the Commission introduced internal and external capacity-building measures to manage its complex and interlinked forensic projects.

8. The Commission intends to compare selected DNA profiles and fingerprints with relevant databases, access to which will be facilitated by an international law enforcement organization. The Commission is also developing its own database of relevant DNA samples, and will continue to work with Lebanese authorities and foreign experts to gain access to materials and conduct further analyses, as appropriate.

II. Progress in the investigations

9. During the reporting period, the Commission's investigation of the Hariri assassination concentrated on its main objectives and expanded the scope of information and evidence being collected. In support of those objectives, and in addition to other operational work it undertook, the Commission conducted 42 interviews linked to the Hariri case during the reporting period.

10. The provision of technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities has continued in the 16 other cases, including the Pierre Gemayel case and the Ain Alaq bombings. The Commission has conducted 27 interviews, carried out forensic investigations on the crime scenes, undertaken the collection and examination of crime scene exhibits, conducted portrait sketch activities with witnesses, and collected closed-circuit television footage in support of these other cases. The overarching objective remains to develop each case individually, while seeking evidence of possible linkages between the cases. Linkages may include the characteristics of the victims targeted, motive, purpose of the attacks, the modus operandi employed, and perpetrators of the attacks.

11. In the reporting period, the Commission developed and implemented a broader plan for collection of evidence in relation to all cases currently under investigation to enhance the evidential base for the cases in conjunction with conventional interview processes. This was done to corroborate and substantiate the witness statements. It is made possible through the acquisition of documentary information such as government and national agency records; and the management of forensic collection, research and analysis projects, including the development of inventories and databases, the coordination of external analysis by forensic experts of exhibits provided by the Lebanese authorities, the systematic exploitation of communications intercept material, further development of communications traffic analysis, further analysis of considerable electronic data holdings and the development of confidential witnesses and contacts.

12. By applying this methodology, the Commission believes it can establish a more detailed picture of events around the crime, elicit new leads and corroborate witness statements. This is especially important when investigating the linkage and knowledge aspects of the cases, where the establishment of the facts can sometimes be clouded by individual subjectivity.

13. The Commission devotes the majority of its time and resources to the Hariri case by developing crime scene leads and collecting evidence relating to the perpetrators, linkage and contextual aspects of the case. It is mindful of the balance

that needs to be struck between the Hariri case, the provision of support in the 14 other cases, and the Gemayel and Ain Alaq cases. This is a changing equation over time, but the Commission strives to take advantage of methodologies that add the most value to all the cases while making the best use of available resources.

A. Hariri investigation

1. Crime scene and associated topics

Properties of the blast — seismological analysis

14. The analysis of seismological data registered on 14 February 2005 by the National Centre of Geophysics in Lebanon is ongoing and aims to establish the properties of the blast that killed Hariri. The preliminary report, which was received from external experts, corroborates the Commission's earlier assessments that only one blast occurred and that the precise time of the blast was 12:55:05.

15. The phenomenon of more than one sound being heard by a number of witnesses is now satisfactorily scientifically and experimentally explained. In fact, three distinct phases of the blast can be observed on the seismograms, owing to the different propagation speeds of three different waves: the primary and secondary volume waves, the surface waves and the sound waves. At a sufficient distance from the explosion, these waves can be mistaken for the signature of more than one explosion. The sound recordings performed during the scaling explosion experiments confirm these theoretical explanations.

16. The final report on the characteristics of the explosion, which will be provided to the Commission in the next reporting period, will include an assessment of the power of the explosion, and a comparative analysis of other explosions that have occurred in Lebanon.

Properties of the blast — scaling explosion experiments

17. The analysis of scaling explosion experiments confirms previous conclusions that the physical phenomena observed at the crime scene are fully compatible with an above-ground explosion. For example, the fireball, deposit of carbon residues on the facades of the hotels, and damage sustained to the buildings and the surroundings, due to the blast effects, are not compatible with an underground explosion.

18. In addition, a full analysis of the autopsy and injuries records and associated photographs of the victims will be undertaken to examine the wound phenomena for the primary blast (for example: the presence of pulmonary lesions and lesions of the eardrums) and secondary blast (projections of debris) associated with an above-ground explosion. A preliminary assessment of the data corroborates that the explosion occurred above the ground. These findings are being confirmed by numerical simulations.

Aerial delivery theory

19. The validity of the hypothesis of an aerial delivery of the explosive device, put forward to the Commission in August 2006, is being examined. The Commission is conducting a scientific, technical and investigative analysis of the possibilities of

the bomb being delivered in this way. Preliminary technical findings indicate that this theory is unlikely. The Commission intends to conduct a fact-finding mission, to include interviews and meetings with relevant experts, in order to develop its understanding of this possibility, and will draw some conclusions during the next reporting period.

Forensic examination of exhibits recovered on the crime scene

20. As previously reported to the Council, the Commission was able to make a preliminary association between certain vehicle parts found in the crater at the crime scene and those of a Mitsubishi van. This was done using documentation and technical information received by the Commission from Japan, as well as the Commission's own-sourced manuals and documents. The process of creating a complete inventory of these exhibits is ongoing, in conformity with international standards, and, once complete, the alleged parts of the vehicle will be submitted for formal identification in cooperation with external technical experts.

Visualization projects

21. Three digital visualization projects have been completed, and a new one is ongoing to enable evidence and case facts to be presented in a way that will facilitate the identification of further investigative steps to be taken. The first two projects are the visualization of the city and the crime scene at various points along the route taken by the Hariri convoy on 14 February 2005, using panoramic and three-dimensional (3D) satellite imagery. The third project is the visualization of a time line reconstruction of Hariri's last day, including the alleged communications traffic activity of the bomb team as the convoy proceeded along its route. A fourth project entails the creation of a model that will allow users to "walk through" the crime scene showing the exact locations where various exhibits were found.

22. Themes being placed into the model include the plotting of trajectories and final locations of physical and biological evidence; the reconstruction of events; animations of the Mitsubishi van and the convoy vehicles as they arrived at the crime scene; the damage caused by the explosion; witness information; video recordings from the closed-circuit television system of a nearby branch of the HSBC bank; and test explosions data.

Geographical origin of the alleged bomber

23. The project to attempt to determine the geographical origin of the bomber is being developed through two approaches. One method uses a team of experts that is conducting a statistical analysis on allele frequencies based on the nuclear DNA profile of the 33 human parts collected from the crime scene. These human parts belong to the man likely to have detonated the device, and are compared with the allele frequencies of profiles provided by several countries. This work should provide a probability-based assessment on the possible place of origin of the alleged bomber.

24. The second method focuses on the study of isotope data. In the Commission's previous report, the results of the first phase of analysis showed that the individual did not spend his youth in Lebanon, but was likely situated there in the two to three months before his death. The Commission can now also add that the man had significant exposure to lead pollution in an urban environment up to the age of

about 12, and that such exposure was low during the last 10 years of his life, possibly indicating that he lived in a more rural environment during this period.

25. In order to advance this line of inquiry, the Commission has collected a total of 112 samples from 28 locations in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon. Over the coming weeks, it will collect samples in three other countries in the region, and further countries are identified for another series of sampling missions.

26. As stated in the previous report, the Commission is mindful that results should be carefully interpreted and the limitations clearly understood. The Commission will treat future results as forensic information to be used primarily for lead purposes in the investigation.

Ongoing crime scene investigations

27. The preliminary results of examinations of the personal effects of a victim discovered at the crime scene in June 2006 have resolved outstanding questions, but further investigative work will be undertaken to finalize the matter in the near future.

28. The issue of a victim who was killed at the crime scene, found in a location where normally he should have been protected from the blast, continues to be investigated. Documentary information in relation to this matter is being translated and will be analysed before a decision is taken on the relevance of this individual to the investigation.

29. The issue of alleged tampering with the crime scene and obstruction of the investigation as a result of removal of artefacts remains under investigation. The Commission is conducting analyses and will undertake further investigative steps to clarify if there was deliberate intent in this matter.

30. A number of interviews were conducted in the reporting period to clarify issues relating to the crime scene prior to the blast, new leads arising from the analysis of witness statements and communications traffic, and the acquisition of artefacts as possible evidence. A minimum of 15 further crime scene witness interviews are planned in the next reporting period in support of these objectives.

31. Investigations are ongoing into the acquisition and storage of the Mitsubishi van, and its preparation with explosives. The Commission has received a body of new information relating to this topic, and over 500 pages of data are being prioritized for translation and analysis. The Commission is developing recent leads concerning the van, investigating the history of the vehicle from the most recent time it was known to be in Lebanon, and working backwards in time from that point.

32. The Commission continues to work on establishing the route of the Mitsubishi van as it was brought to the area prior to the attack, then towards the St. Georges Hotel area, and then on its final path on 14 February 2005.

33. The Commission has largely resolved the allegation that a red car was parked outside the St. Georges Hotel, apparently reserving a space for the Mitsubishi van before its arrival on the crime scene. It has been suggested that the vehicle had driven off to make way for the van to park in its place. It has been established by witness interviews and the examination of photographs of the scene immediately after the explosion that the position of the red car was some 15 metres before the

place where the crater was created. The conclusion at this stage, subject to further information coming to light, is that there is no direct connection between that vehicle and the arrival of the Mitsubishi van.

2. Individuals involved in the commission of the crime

Communications

34. The Commission's analysis of communications traffic continues in order to support and validate different points arising from the investigations. Much work has been done to support the interviews conducted, in order that respective communications contact with other persons of interest to the case can be discussed with witnesses. Patterns of communications traffic, including frequencies and timings of calls, and linkages and clear associations to others, are all developed and elicit investigation leads.

35. In relation to the six mobile cellular telephone SIM cards allegedly used by the team that executed the operation on the day of 14 February 2005, the Commission has developed further information of interest relating to associated earlier operations, including possible surveillance and reconnaissance activity, possible practice-runs or earlier attempts to kill Rafik Hariri, and other actions undertaken by the team. New areas of interest have emerged from this analysis and are currently being examined.

36. The Commission has also undertaken an investigative project examining the role of the persons using the six SIM cards and activities that can be inferred from their use. This exercise is supported by the Commission's existing communications traffic analysis projects in relation to the cards. The objective is fourfold: first, to reaffirm the validity of the hypothesis that the cards could indeed have been used by the bomb team to execute its task; second, to establish whether other modes of communication must have been used between the members of the team, and also perhaps with other individuals, in order for the attack to take place; third, to allow the Commission to establish a better understanding of how the crime was committed on 14 February; and finally, to understand further what other activity the bomb team undertook, and what locations it travelled to and why, in the days leading up to the attack.

37. Such extensive analysis enables the Commission to reach a better understanding of the bomb team, its role in the crime and its other activities. This in turn creates further investigative leads geographically and temporally, and pointing to the activities of individuals outside the immediate bombing team the Commission believes were using the six SIM cards.

38. This detailed examination of the activities of the six SIM cards has resulted in a number of significant elements for ongoing investigation. These include, but are not limited to: potential identification of the role of each participant in the preparation, planning, surveillance and actual attack; the bombing team's anticipation of Hariri's activities and movements; and possible earlier attempts on Hariri's life.

39. One working hypothesis is that the bomb team had to ensure that Hariri was indeed dead after the explosion in order for the video claim of responsibility to be delivered and to have resonance with its intended audience. It is possible that the team, and those commissioning the crime, could not afford to deliver a claim of

responsibility to the global media if Hariri had survived the attack. Thus, the Commission is exploring the hypothesis that one member of the team, or an associate, was tasked with confirming the death of the principal target as soon as possible and may have contacted someone waiting for the news. Based on existing information, the time frame for this activity would have been within approximately 45 minutes of the explosion.

40. This in turn led to the series of events related to the taped claim of responsibility and the subsequent telephone calls made to media outlets. The Commission is examining the hypothesis that one or more members of the bomb team was responsible for delivering the tape and making the subsequent telephone calls to the media. Other variations on this hypothesis are being explored to establish the numbers of perpetrators who may have been involved on the day of the attack.

Ahmed Abu Adass

41. In the reporting period, the investigation developed its understanding of how Ahmed Abu Adass was identified and chosen to be the person to make the video claim of responsibility, who involved him in that activity and where and when that occurred. A working hypothesis is that he was identified because of his personality and other specific characteristics. It is possible that his association and relationship with one or more individuals whom he met at his place of worship led him to depart his home on 16 January 2005, for reasons that are currently unknown.

42. The Commission is aware that Ahmed Abu Adass was acquainted with individuals associated with extremist groups, at least because they attended the same place of worship, which he frequented regularly and where he occasionally conducted prayers. The Commission also conducted extensive analysis of communications traffic records associated with Ahmed Abu Adass, including analysis of the telephone communication at his home and place of work and on lines belonging to his alleged associates.

43. A working hypothesis is that Ahmed Abu Adass was either coerced or duped into making the videotaped claim of responsibility. The claim he read out on tape was made on behalf of a group, and Ahmed Abu Adass himself did not state he would be the one who would carry out the attack. In relation to the tape's production, it is of note that relatives and persons who knew him before his disappearance have stated that his appearance on the videotape was physically different from that before 16 January 2005. To some, he appeared even thinner than previously; his beard had markedly grown, indicating that he may have made the tape towards the end of the approximately four-week period between his disappearance and 14 February 2005. His clothing was also different from his usual style in that he had headwear and clothing that his close friends and family had not seen him wearing before.

44. It is of interest to the investigation that a note was included with the video on 14 February 2005, which stated that the bomber was indeed Ahmed Abu Adass. From its forensic findings, the Commission believes this to be highly unlikely. One working hypothesis is that the video and the accompanying note could have been designed to deceive. Another working hypothesis is that while an extremist group may have been involved in part in committing the crime as outlined in the tape and

note, this group was actually manipulated by others for another objective not related to its own organizational aspirations.

45. Thus, the Commission continues to investigate the various possibilities concerning the group that executed the crime. The Commission has received information in relation to individuals who operated in Lebanon and beyond who may have been involved in the production of the Ahmed Abu Adass tape, and also may have participated in the attack on Rafik Hariri in more than one context. In connection with this information, the Commission has undertaken a number of missions outside Lebanon, conducted 23 interviews to date, researched over 200 gigabytes of data from numerous computers, USB devices, CD-ROMs, mobile telephones and SIM cards, and analysed large volumes of communications traffic.

46. A working hypothesis is that a small number of individuals belonging to a larger group may have come together to undertake the filming of the claim of responsibility, acquire the Mitsubishi van and have it prepared with explosives. They may also have participated in the acquisition of an individual who was to detonate the bomb, and may have assisted in delivering him and the bomb to the scene of the crime.

47. The Commission has a number of investigative leads to follow up, further interviews to conduct, and further communications traffic analysis and forensic collection missions to perform. It also awaits the final forensic analysis of various artefacts that are possibly associated with this working hypothesis, including video cameras and related equipment, cassette tapes, computer hardware and other items. These artefacts were submitted for DNA/fingerprint research and forensic digital analysis during the last reporting period. To date, 118 samples have been taken and will be analyzed for nuclear and mitochondrial DNA profiling, and 127 fingerprints have been collected.

Individuals with prior knowledge of the attack

48. The Commission believes that beyond those directly involved in the crime and those who decided it should take place, certain other individuals may have had prior knowledge of the attack. Some of those individuals possibly only had partial information; for example, knowing about the bomb, but not for whom it was intended, or knowing that Hariri was to be killed, but not knowing precisely when. The Commission is also exploring hypotheses that some knew both the target and the timing of the attack, and were informed for specific reasons.

49. The Commission is developing a hypothesis whereby the final phase of the operation to assassinate Hariri took shape by early February 2005, at which point all necessary components for the operation were assembled. These include the van, acquired and prepared with explosives and ready for use; the bomber, prepared, briefed and ready to be deployed; the minimum necessary information acquired, and surveillance and reconnaissance conducted, to be able to undertake the operation; the bomb team undiscovered and able to execute the operation; the videotaped message of Ahmed Abu Adass completed and ready to be delivered upon the success of the operation; and, most importantly, the intent still present in the minds of those who ordered the crime to go ahead with the operation.

50. A working hypothesis is that the bomb team was working within a "window" of opportunity to deliver the attack on Hariri, rather than one specific day, given the

significance of the target and the time that would have been spent in overall preparation of the attack. That preparation time was most likely measured in weeks rather than days.

51. The activities of some potentially relevant individuals were noticeably altered during this period, as the bombing team began what became the final activities prior to the attack. The Commission is investigating such issues, and is finding that attitudes, behavioural patterns and comments made by certain persons in the period before the killing could have relevance.

3. Motive to assassinate Hariri

Rafik Hariri timeline

52. As indicated in earlier reports to the Council, the Commission had collected a significant amount of evidence and information related to Rafik Hariri during the last 15 months of his life. The picture assembled is complex and multilayered, and provides part of the backdrop for the motive behind the decision to assassinate him. This aspect of the Commission's investigation is ongoing, and is unlikely to be completed in the next reporting period given the significant amount of work required.

53. The following issues shaped Hariri's environment in this period: the adoption of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) and the political implications of its implementation; the extension of the term of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud; the personal and political dynamics that existed between Hariri and other political parties and leaders in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and other countries; the preparation and manoeuvring ahead of the parliamentary elections due to be held in May 2005, as well as other business matters in which he was involved. All of these factors came together and were handled by Hariri, sometimes proactively, and sometimes in reaction to events around him. The Commission believes it is likely that a combination of these factors may have created the environment in which the motive and intent to kill him arose.

54. Whereas the Commission had previously adopted a broad focus in the investigation of possible motive, the current reporting period saw these significantly narrowed down to the group of inquiries linked to Hariri's political activities. The Commission is developing a detailed picture of the factual reality that is substantially beyond its earlier understanding of events.

55. From this understanding of the dominating themes, it has become more evident that Hariri was perceived to be in a position of vulnerability from a security perspective. There are indications nevertheless that he received assurances that he would not be the focus of an attack, and that even up to his last few days, he remained confident, at least for external consumption, that he would not be the subject of an attack.

56. The Commission continues to develop the hypothesis that Hariri's threat environment was sufficiently serious for measures to have been taken in attempts to ameliorate the underlying situation, both in the Lebanese political establishment and in the international community.

57. In the last months of Hariri's life, he was very focused on the forthcoming 2005 elections. The nature of his intentions for the planned elections and his

perceived likelihood of success, as well as his political and personal relationships with other parties and their leaders, are particularly significant aspects of the Commission's work in this area, particularly given the rivalries existing between certain political figures at the time.

58. Negotiations unfolded during that period between Hariri and other individuals, including potential candidates, and intense interest was focused upon the draft electoral law, including the drawing of electoral district boundaries in Lebanon and, in particular, in Beirut. Throughout that period, Hariri was also adjusting his political stance, and on the day of his murder had made public that position.

59. It is of some note that Hariri was killed on the day that Parliament was scheduled to debate the electoral law to be applied in the forthcoming elections. Another working hypothesis for the Commission is that those who decided upon the assassination saw it as beneficial to kill him before he formally began his election campaign, especially given the perception in the media at the time that he was likely to win.

60. The Commission has established that Hariri worked on differing political and professional levels, which was reflected in the nature and extent of information, views and positions he discussed with those with whom he interacted. That is evident from the information the Commission has collected from some of his friends, acquaintances, political interlocutors and apparent rivals.

61. It is therefore critical that the Commission continue to have access to those political and diplomatic interlocutors with whom Hariri dealt, and those individuals involved in the relevant political and diplomatic dynamics at all levels. The Commission looks forward to continuing cooperation with such individuals, including, where appropriate, Government officials, in order to ensure the completeness of its investigations.

62. The Commission is developing a working hypothesis that in the period immediately prior to his death, Hariri and others in the national and international political arena were taking steps to defuse the tensions that had arisen between him and others on the political stage. These initiatives apparently included the development of diplomatic and political dialogue between Syrian and Lebanese individuals and Hariri. This dialogue had previously been managed through other Syrian and Lebanese channels, which had apparently fuelled misperceptions and aggravated the already tense political environment.

63. A working hypothesis is that the initial decision to kill Hariri was taken before the later attempts at rapprochement got under way and most likely before early January 2005. This leads to a possible situation in the last weeks before his murder in which two tracks, not necessarily linked, were running in parallel. On one track, Hariri was engaged in rapprochement initiatives and, on the other, preparations for his assassination were under way.

Other investigative areas of interest

64. In a wider context, the Commission continues to seek information that broadens and deepens its knowledge of the political and security environment in Lebanon at the time leading up to and beyond Hariri's assassination. To that end, the Commission has received significant documentary information from certain Lebanese agencies, and continues to seek more, based upon strictly focused

requirements. It will continue to request documents of relevance, and anticipates expanding the concept to incorporate other agencies and other forms of data as necessary.

65. Similarly in this context, the Commission conducted three interviews with Syrian officials in relation to the location of parts of the archive brought back from Lebanon at the time of the Syrian withdrawal in 2005. Following those interviews, two document exploitation missions to those archives at two locations in the Syrian Arab Republic were undertaken, in order to acquire those historical documents created within a strict time period that were of relevance to the broader contextual knowledge objective. The missions were undertaken in conjunction with Syrian authorities, and have elicited useful results with the selection and provision of documentary information. It is anticipated that further requests for assistance will be forthcoming in this regard throughout the next reporting period.

66. The Commission continues to clarify issues surrounding individuals alleged to have engaged in financial transactions with Rafik Hariri, especially during the period immediately leading up to 14 February 2005. This area of the investigation is complex, and the Commission is ensuring that it is pursued only to the extent that it is linked to its investigative objectives.

B. Technical assistance in the other cases

1. The 14 other cases

67. The Commission's focus in the provision of technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities during the reporting period continued with work aimed at interlinking a number of investigative projects. That work will continue to develop in the same manner in the next period. A seismological analysis of the 14 cases is also being conducted by external experts, and the Commission anticipates that it will receive the results before the end of the next reporting period.

Six targeted attacks

68. The Commission has conducted 17 interviews relating to the six targeted attacks in this reporting period, and in doing so it has almost concluded its interviews with the surviving victims of the six attacks, as well as with the victims' families and close associates. The primary purpose of these interviews has been to establish the victims' movements on their last days; determine possible motive for the attacks; understand the victims' security arrangements, if any; identify whether they were under surveillance; and determine any threats or assurances they received. Various leads have emerged from these interviews, and these will be followed up in the coming weeks and months.

69. The Commission has also completed a number of internal analytical reports relating to the Lebanese authorities' case files of the six attacks, and has submitted 12 related requests for assistance. It has also conducted communications traffic analysis in support of other interviews related to a number of the cases, and continues to examine potential communications linkages in the modus operandi of the attacks, and potential commonalities between cases. This work will continue for the next reporting period, and the Commission will also undertake an analysis of exhibits found at each crime scene, including the possible remains of the improvised

explosive devices (IEDs), and other associated items, as deemed relevant. In conjunction with this analysis, an assessment of the modus operandi used by those placing the bombs will be undertaken to develop further the Commission's understanding of commonalities between each attack.

70. The Commission is in the process of prioritizing and translating a number of forensic and crime scene reports provided by the Lebanese authorities, which will be sent for further analysis to an external team of forensic experts. It will also examine all remaining relevant forensic documents and materials in the possession of the Lebanese authorities, develop an exhibits and documents inventory and conduct further forensic examinations on the information and exhibits.

71. The Commission also requested that the Lebanese authorities facilitate an examination of the victims' vehicles and other cars containing the IEDs that were used in the attacks. The Commission conducted a preliminary examination of the available vehicles. These cars have been examined by a visiting forensic expert team in order to develop leads regarding the modus operandi of these attacks and, potentially, to establish horizontal and vertical linkage to other attacks. A number of additional exhibits and residues were taken by the experts for further forensic examinations.

72. The Commission has also recently received a draft report from visiting forensic experts who examined the scene where Gebran Tueni was killed. In addition to 32 exhibits previously recovered by the Lebanese authorities, these experts collected and examined an additional 190 exhibits.

73. The experts confirmed that an amount of high explosives was used in the attack on Tueni, and that the IED in this case was contained in a Renault Rapid vehicle. The bomb was activated when Tueni's Range Rover drove by. The Commission believes that the IED was most likely triggered by a remote control device. A time delay activation mechanism is unlikely to have been used because it was not known in advance precisely when Tueni would drive by the location of the IED. It is also very unlikely that the IED was triggered by a suicide bomber, as there were no human remains found at the site arising from any individuals other than the three victims who were killed in the attack.

74. The experts also found that the attack on Tueni occurred at a location that was conducive to a bomb attack. It took place on a narrow road, along a mountain ridge, which could be viewed clearly from the area surrounding and opposite the crime scene. This location chosen provided a clear unobstructed view of the vehicle-borne IED and, as such, allowed for an effective position to trigger the device remotely.

75. In the El-Murr case, the Commission arranged for an international law enforcement sketch artist to develop the image of two individuals seen acting suspiciously, one of whom was seen the night before the crime, and another who fled the scene at the time of the attack. At this stage, the Commission does not believe the sketches identify the man as being the same person.

Eight bomb attacks

76. The Commission continues to implement the plan for the provision of technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities in the eight bomb attacks where no specific individuals appear to have been targeted, by reviewing and analysing the files as received from the Prosecutor General and the investigating judges.

77. The Commission has sent seven requests for assistance to the Lebanese authorities, requesting, inter alia, additional witness and suspect statements, closed-circuit television footage relevant to the cases, intercepted communications if available and information relating to vehicles of interest.

78. The preliminary objective in this exercise is to conduct individual case analyses for each of the eight cases and make some suggestions as to further investigative steps that may be taken by the Lebanese authorities. Through that exercise, the next aim is to continue to develop horizontal analysis in relation to perpetrator identification, motive, intent and modus operandi.

79. In support of these objectives, and as in the six targeted attacks, the Commission will also undertake a preliminary analysis of exhibits found at each crime scene, and will study each location with relevant experts to conduct a first assessment of the modus operandi used by the perpetrators.

2. Pierre Gemayel case

80. The Commission continues to provide technical investigative support to the Lebanese authorities by conducting interviews, analysing witness statements, collecting closed-circuit television imagery, performing forensic work, conducting communications analysis and reconstructing the crime scene events. In support of this work, the Commission has submitted 10 requests for assistance to the Lebanese authorities.

81. Following the Commission's investigations conducted at the crime scene in November 2006, three days after the assassination, 240 exhibits, including DNA samples, fingerprints, mobile phones, and ballistic and transfer traces, were submitted to forensic examination and analysis.

82. Preliminary results show that there was no global positioning system in the victim's car, which may have given useful tracking information. The specific make and model of at least one vehicle used by the perpetrators has been established. Also, 22 DNA samples taken from a number of places on the vehicle used by Gemayel have been analysed. The DNA profiles of the two victims were found at many locations, and eight DNA samples taken from the doors gave the profile not only of Gemayel, but also of more than one unknown individual.

83. The Commission has conducted a detailed ballistics analysis on the 49 cartridge cases and 55 bullets or parts of bullets found at the crime scene. It can now be concluded that a minimum of five different weapons were used. In addition, the Commission has prepared weapons photo-boards and has acquired recordings of the sounds of different weapons used, in order to assist in the interview process. Statements collected from witnesses are compatible with the scientific findings and have allowed the Commission to refine its understanding of the weapons used in this crime.

84. Sketches of the alleged assassins of Pierre Gemayel provided by the Commission to the Lebanese authorities were recently released and publicized, and they will form part of a broader sketch database that will be developed during the next reporting period.

85. The Commission has developed further investigative leads, including those arising from additional closed-circuit television footage discovered in the proximity

of the scene of the crime. The footage has been sent to a technical laboratory for enhancement of the images. This work is ongoing, as is a 3D-reconstruction and forensic examination of items relating to the crime scene and other items that may have association with the crime. The Commission will continue to provide technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities on this case for the foreseeable future.

3. Ain Alaq bombings

86. The Commission has taken a series of investigative and forensic steps to support the Lebanese authorities in their investigations into these bombings, in which three people were killed and a number of individuals were injured on 13 February 2007. A team of forensic experts was provided to conduct forensic examinations on the crime scene, including examining the Mitsubishi and Kia buses that were bombed, a process which took five days to complete, between 20 and 24 February 2007.

87. The team recovered 127 relevant exhibits, as well as 242 steel ball bearings associated with the explosions. The team provided a preliminary analysis of its findings, and will submit a full report during the next reporting period. The findings indicate that there had been one IED inside each bus, and that the explosive in each, possibly TNT, was approximately 1.5 kg in weight. There were approximately 750 grams to 1 kg of steel ball bearings of the same diameter. Ballistic examinations confirmed that the ball bearings were placed around the explosive.

88. The devices were placed in each bus in a similar position, towards the rear and under a seat on the left-hand side. At the time of explosion, the IED in the Mitsubishi bus was approximately 0.75 m above the ground, and in the Kia bus approximately 1.10 m above the ground. A small number of exhibits were collected that may have come from the initiation system of the IED, and it was assessed that the devices were likely detonated by a time delay device or possibly by remote control. Several fragments of bags that could have been used to carry the bombs were recovered and submitted for forensic examination.

89. The final report on these crime scene investigations and the results of the forensic examinations conducted on exhibits (DNA, fingerprints and explosives) will be received during the next reporting period.

90. It remains unclear at this stage what the motive was in executing these attacks, in the place, on the date and at the time they occurred. In terms of modus operandi, the use of ball bearings may be indicative of the intent to injure as many people as possible with the relatively small amount of explosive used. It is unclear at present whether the bombs were placed by one or two persons, and whether more individuals were involved in the attacks. The Commission is working upon a number of hypotheses in this regard in support of the Lebanese authorities.

III. External cooperation

A. Interaction with the Lebanese authorities

91. During the reporting period, the Commission has continued to work closely with the Lebanese authorities in the Hariri investigation and the 16 other cases. This close interaction has taken the form of regular meetings between the Commission and the Prosecutor General and senior members of his office, as well as communication with the investigative judges assigned to the various cases and with the senior representative appointed by the Internal Security Forces.

92. The Commission has also exchanged a significant amount of information, including documents, reports and other materials, with Lebanese authorities. Specifically, the Commission continues to share with the appropriate institutions the substance of relevant information that it obtains in the course of its investigations in a manner that does not compromise the interest of the source of this information. This continues to include information that may be relevant to individuals who are detained by the Lebanese authorities.

93. During the reporting period, the Commission also continued to rely on the cooperation and assistance of the Lebanese authorities, especially as its caseload had increased and its investigations into the Hariri assassination, the 14 cases, the Gemayel murder and the Ain Alaq attacks had advanced and necessitated a broader range of investigative actions.

94. Thus, during the reporting period, the Commission addressed 57 formal requests for assistance to the Prosecutor General seeking, inter alia, his help in obtaining documents and other information and in facilitating interviews and other missions on Lebanese territory. The Lebanese authorities responded fully and expeditiously to these requests.

B. Cooperation with the Syrian Arab Republic

95. Pursuant to the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under Security Council resolutions 1636 (2005) and 1644 (2005), and the common understanding reached between the Commission and the Syrian Arab Republic in 2006, the cooperation of the Republic with the Commission remains generally satisfactory.

96. During the reporting period, the Commission submitted four formal requests for assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic seeking information regarding individuals, groups and issues of interest to the Commission and requesting the facilitation of interviews and other missions on Syrian territory.

97. Following the transmission of its requests for assistance, the Commission has, since December, undertaken a number of investigative activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, including conducting interviews, where, once again, responses by individuals can be characterized as variable in quality on occasion; the holding of meetings with relevant Syrian officials; the collection of samples from locations in the Syrian Arab Republic to support the geographic origin forensic project; and the collection of documents from two archive storage sites. The last three missions in particular were arranged and facilitated in a professional and timely manner by the Syrian authorities.

98. The Syrian Arab Republic has continued to provide the Commission with assistance in response to its requests within the appropriate timescales, and the Commission is grateful for the logistical and security arrangements provided by Syrian authorities for its activities in Syria. The Commission will continue to request the full cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic, which remains crucial to the swift and successful completion of the mandate of the Commission.

C. Cooperation with other States

99. The Commission continues to rely on the willingness of States to provide information and expertise and facilitate its work on their territories when required. During the reporting period, a total of 40 new formal requests for assistance were sent to 23 States, in addition to the requests for assistance addressed to the Syrian and Lebanese authorities.

100. The Commission has greatly benefited from the responses of States to its requests where full and prompt cooperation has been forthcoming. The Commission is very grateful for this cooperation.

101. As the Commission noted in its last report to the Council, a lack of responsiveness by certain States to the Commission's requests could have serious consequences for the Commission's work, in areas such as arranging interviews, providing information on the whereabouts of certain individuals, and technical assistance.

102. In its last report, the Commission noted that responses to requests from 10 Member States were overdue. In view of the importance of the assistance requested and the time frame in which it aims to complete its investigative activities, the Commission concentrated on following up on all outstanding requests for assistance. The Commission held a series of meetings with relevant ambassadors to discuss past requests. As a result of those meetings, almost all outstanding matters were resolved to the Commission's satisfaction, with responses received, and, where appropriate, mechanisms introduced to facilitate the resolution of pending issues.

IV. Organizational support

A. Recruitment

103. During the past three months, the Commission undertook a series of management measures to streamline its internal processes in operational support activities and maintain its recruitment initiative to fill its outstanding positions. In this period, the Commission recruited 35 international and 5 national staff with the assistance of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As of March, a further 30 candidates are under active recruitment. These efforts will be maintained until the Commission has reached a satisfactory level of staffing.

104. The investigation division has 41 staff and consultants in March 2007, compared to 29 in December 2006. Additional analysts, investigators, legal officers, forensic experts and a database administrator are currently being recruited.

105. The Commission has been working closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to afford the Commission the operational flexibility it needs to carry out its mandate, particularly regarding staffing issues. The Commission has formally approached several Member States to assist it in the identification of much-needed database information management specialists. Positive responses from Member States to this request would be invaluable to the Commission's work in this important area.

106. All additional posts requested for 2007 were approved in the budget, bringing the total number of international posts in the Commission to 188. The additional posts will assist the Commission to execute its mandate more expeditiously by allowing more concurrent investigative activity to take place and improving the efficiency of the operational support aspects of its work. Out of the 188 budgeted posts, 104 have so far been filled. Of the 51 posts approved for national staff, 41 have been filled with the remaining 10 under active recruitment.

107. Problems remain regarding the recruitment and retention of international language staff such as Arabic language interpreters, translators and transcribers. The Commission is experiencing serious difficulties in finding suitable candidates for recruitment. So far, only 3 of 27 such posts have been filled. This creates significant bottlenecks resulting in delays in investigative activities. The Commission is undertaking varied recruitment initiatives in order to acquire resources in this critical area.

B. Security

108. Since the Commission's last report, the security situation in Lebanon and in the region has remained uncertain and unpredictable. The bombing of the two buses in Ain Alaq, together with numerous discoveries of explosives and IEDs around Beirut and beyond, contribute to this unstable security environment. The Commission continues to enjoy excellent coordination and cooperation with the Lebanese security forces, who have spared no effort in meeting the safety and security needs of the Commission in carrying out its mandate. The Commission is very grateful for this support.

109. Security concerns and restrictions impact the work of the Commission and its investigative activities, and, as a result, a number of steps to mitigate anticipated risks have been taken to maintain a safe and secure environment within which all Commission personnel can function effectively.

110. Emerging security trends are continually being analysed and integrated into the operational context of the Commission's work. Crisis management measures, evacuation procedures and business continuity planning are maintained based on the variables in the security environment surrounding the Commission's work.

V. Conclusions

111. The Commission's primary strategic objective remains the continued investigation into the killing of Rafik Hariri and 22 others, as well as the provision of technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities in the other cases. In pursuit of the goals in the Hariri case, the Commission aims to further establish the facts and

to continue to seek links between the other cases and the Hariri case. In so doing, the Commission seeks to conduct its work in the most expeditious investigative timescale, while respecting a framework of appropriate legal standards.

112. During the next reporting period, the Commission will maintain the investigative focus discussed in this report. A total of around 250 individuals have been identified for interview, and the Commission will seek to interview approximately 50 of them in the next three months. The Commission also plans to acquire further documentary information, additional electronic material and communications data for analysis.

113. The Commission is grateful for the full support of the Prosecutor General of Lebanon in conducting its work, in particular as it relates to sensitive and complicated investigative steps that have been undertaken and that are being planned. Both the Commission and the Prosecutor General will continue to create a secure and confidential working environment for witnesses and for the Commission's staff.

114. The Commission recognizes the complexities of the Hariri case as it develops. During the reporting period, the Commission narrowed down possible motives to those linked with Hariri's political activities. The Commission's understanding of the facts has advanced substantially, producing valuable links within and between the main components of the case. In the next reporting period, and potentially beyond that, the Commission believes that it will be able to develop further a unifying factual theory built upon newly identified linking evidence. The aim remains to link together the most responsible perpetrators with others who knew about the crime, those who participated in the execution of it, and those who assisted in the preparation of the necessary components for its execution.

115. The Commission's work on the other cases remains focused upon the provision of technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities by identifying and applying investigative support that adds value to each case without putting excessive strain on the Commission's resources. The Commission also continues to identify horizontal links between each case, and with the Hariri case, where possible. The Commission believes that in the next reporting phase, the depth of knowledge of each case will be further enhanced to allow such potential linkages to emerge.

116. The Commission notes that requests for assistance it has addressed to Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and other States have received mostly positive and timely responses. Assistance from all these States remains essential to allow the Commission to carry out its investigative work effectively.

117. The Commission also notes that the volatile political and security environment in Lebanon and the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff have an impact on the Commission's ability to fulfil its mandate in a timely fashion. The Commission will continue to concentrate its efforts on managing these factors as it works towards its objectives.

118. Finally, the Commission continues its work in anticipation of the creation of a special tribunal for Lebanon. In the light of the current and planned investigative activities outlined in this report, it is unlikely that the Commission will complete its work before its current mandate expires in June 2007. The Commission therefore welcomes the request for an extension of its mandate beyond that date.

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Fourteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1712 (2006), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 31 March 2007 and requested me to provide information on progress made in meeting the broad benchmarks outlined in my report of 12 September 2006 (S/2006/743). The present report provides an update on major developments in Liberia and of the progress made towards meeting the key benchmarks for the consolidation and drawdown of UNMIL since my report of 11 December 2006 (S/2006/958).

II. Major political developments

2. The overall political situation in Liberia remained relatively stable during the period under review. On 16 January 2007, in an address to mark the anniversary of her administration's first year in office, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf highlighted the restoration of peace, the progress made in economic recovery, the growth in public revenue, the partial restoration of health services, the increase in school enrolment and the provision of electricity and pipe-borne water to some parts of Monrovia as the main achievements of her Government to date. She also identified the many challenges ahead, including the creation of employment opportunities, the rehabilitation of roads and the strengthening of national capacities to implement her Government's reform agenda. On 29 January, in her annual address to the Legislature on the state of the nation, the President expressed her intention to submit 10 concessions and acts for legislative approval, including the governance reform commission bill, the national defence bill and the draft anti-corruption statute.

3. The work of the Legislature was hampered by divisions in the House of Representatives over calls for the removal of Edwin Snowe from the post of Speaker of the House. The group of legislators calling for his removal claimed that he no longer enjoyed the confidence of members of the House and accused him of bringing the House into disrepute through activities that were inconsistent with legislative practice. The divisions within the House resulted in two groups of legislators meeting at separate venues.

4. On 18 January, 43 members of the House of Representatives at a meeting in Virginia, just outside Monrovia, passed a resolution to remove Mr. Snowe from the

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position of Speaker. In response, on 22 January, Mr. Snowe filed a petition for a writ of prohibition in the Supreme Court, arguing that the procedure adopted in the passage of the resolution denied him due process, and that the sitting parliament had passed the resolution in a venue that breached article 40 of the Constitution, which provides for both Houses of the Legislature to sit in the same city. Mr. Snowe also alleged that members of the House of Representatives had been bribed by the Executive to remove him from office. Although the Supreme Court granted Mr. Snowe's petition, he eventually resigned on 15 February, as the number of legislators demanding his removal continued to increase. The Deputy Speaker was designated to act until the election of a new Speaker.

5. The events leading up to the resignation of the Speaker affected proceedings in both the House and the Senate, in particular the passage and enactment of draft legislation. It also increased tensions between the three branches of Government. In the meantime, the International Contact Group on Liberia, some legislators and members of civil society have called for an independent and transparent investigation into the allegations of bribery made by the Speaker.

6. On 6 February, the National Elections Commission organized a by-election to fill the vacant House of Representatives seat for District Number 6 in Nimba County. No candidate obtained the absolute majority required to be declared the winner. As a result, on 20 February, a run-off by-election was held between two candidates from the ruling Unity Party and the Liberian Action Party, which had both secured the highest votes. On 21 February, the Unity Party candidate was declared the winner.

7. As part of the Government's anti-corruption campaign, the former Chairman of the now defunct National Transitional Government of Liberia, Charles Gyude Bryant, together with several former ministers and deputy ministers who were implicated in the report on economic crimes prepared by a team of investigators from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the transitional period, were charged with financial malfeasance during the period under review. The former Vice-Chairman of the Transitional Government, Wesley Momo Johnson, was also interrogated by the Liberian National Police in connection with findings in the same report. On 17 February, the Supreme Court ordered the execution of a search warrant to secure the financial records of six former Finance Ministry personnel from the Transitional Government, who are being prosecuted for embezzlement of public funds. On 2 March, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Edwin Snowe, was also questioned by the police in connection with allegations that he misappropriated some US$ 1 million from the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company while serving as managing director during the transitional period.

8. The risk of localized inter-ethnic conflicts resulting from property and land disputes remains a major source of concern. On 22 January, some 50 members of the Mandingo ethnic group from Nimba County staged a demonstration in front of President Johnson-Sirleaf's office in Monrovia, demanding to talk to the President about land disputes between them and members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. The President received the group's leadership to discuss their concerns. In the meantime, the Presidential Commission that was established to investigate the inter-ethnic land and property disputes in Nimba County submitted its report to the President. The Commission recommended, inter alia, the urgent institution of

mechanisms to reconcile feuding communities. The President subsequently requested the Commission to share its recommendations with the residents of Nimba County, during which the key recommendations were accepted. The President has since ordered the restitution of contested properties in Nimba County to their rightful owners and requested UNMIL to assist in repairing roads designated for commercial activities in the area.

9. The political and economic tensions in Guinea have been a source of concern. On 14 and 15 December 2006, President Johnson-Sirleaf and President Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone visited Conakry to meet with President Lansana Conté to discuss subregional issues, including the revitalization of the Mano River Union. On 20 February, the two Presidents returned to Conakry where they discussed with President Conté the political crisis in Guinea, including reports about the possible involvement of Liberian ex-combatants in the disturbances in Guinea. The Presidents agreed to reactivate the Mano River Union security units in all three countries to facilitate information-sharing and to ensure border security. Following her return to Monrovia, President Johnson-Sirleaf made a statement to the press advising that any Liberian who crossed the border to take part in the conflict in Guinea would be in violation of Liberian laws.

III. Security situation

10. The overall security situation in Liberia has remained generally calm and stable. However, deactivated security personnel and retrenched employees of the National Ports Authority staged demonstrations to protest the non-payment of outstanding benefits, including salary arrears. In one such incident, on 8 February, some 500 deactivated army, police and security personnel organized a violent demonstration in Monrovia, which disrupted the flow of traffic and normal business activities. They demanded to meet with President Johnson-Sirleaf regarding the payment of benefits. The Liberian National Police, supported by the United Nations police and formed police units, brought these incidents under control.

11. Criminal activities, including armed robbery, decreased significantly in Monrovia and its environs, while the number of reported cases of rape increased during the reporting period. The reduction in reported criminal activities was due to "Operation Sweeping Wave", which was mounted by UNMIL, the Liberian National Police and other national security agencies to address the problem of violent crime in Monrovia. The operation involved the conduct of cordon and search activities, and increased day and night patrols in high crime areas. In a separate joint operation named "Spider Web", which was launched in December to curb criminal activities during the festive period, several checkpoints were set up in strategic locations throughout Monrovia to conduct random checks on vehicles.

12. On 10 December, UNMIL carried out the second phase of "Exercise Tight Grip" to test the Mission's capabilities and operational readiness to respond to a possible serious deterioration in the security situation in the country. The first phase of the exercise was carried out in Monrovia in October 2006.

13. The security situation along the borders with Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea remained stable with no visible threat to the stability of Liberia, despite rumours about the possible involvement of Liberian ex-combatants in the disturbances in Guinea and unconfirmed reports about cross-border movements of

Liberian ex-combatants into Côte d'Ivoire. However, the continuing uncertainty in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea continues to present a potential threat to stability in Liberia. UNMIL has continued to coordinate with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and with the Guinean military forces to monitor the security situation in border areas. UNMIL conducted concurrent patrols with the Guinean authorities along the Liberian-Guinean border in "Operation Seskin 2" from 22 to 30 January and, without the Guinean authorities, in "Operation Seskin 3" from 19 to 23 February. Similar concurrent patrols along the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border were conducted with the Sierra Leonean authorities in "Operation Loko 3". These exercises were aimed at demonstrating the presence of United Nations security forces in the border areas, deterring illegal cross-border movements, establishing cross-border liaison and reassuring the local populations while fostering better coordination among the security agencies deployed in the border areas.

IV. Deployment of the Mission

A. Military component

14. As at 1 March, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,832 out of an authorized strength of 15,125. A company of the quick reaction force from Pakistan comprising 250 personnel arrived in the Mission on 23 December 2006 to replace the Swedish quick reaction force, which departed in October 2006. In addition to the activities described in paragraphs 11 to 13 above, UNMIL continued to provide security throughout the country. The Mission undertook several additional cordon and search operations to retrieve weapons, extended support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) community arms collection for development programme, carried out air and ground patrols, especially along Liberia's borders, and assisted in the rehabilitation of roads and bridges. It also provided security support to the Special Court in accordance with Security Council resolution 1626 (2005). In addition, the UNMIL quick reaction force conducted "Exercise Green Horizon" from 22 to 28 January, which was aimed at reinforcing the security of the Special Court.

B. Police component

15. As at 1 March, the Mission's police strength stood at 1,201 officers out of an authorized ceiling of 1,240 officers, and included 574 United Nations police advisers, 604 officers in 5 formed police units, 17 corrections officers and 6 immigration officers. The fifth formed police unit, from India, comprising 105 women and 20 men, arrived in the Mission on 30 January. This unit is the first predominantly female police unit deployed in the history of the United Nations. During the reporting period, the UNMIL police component continued to mentor, monitor, advise, train and support the Liberian National Police. It supported the efforts of the Liberian National Police to contain threats to public order in Monrovia and other urban centres, as well as on rubber plantations. It also provided basic and specialized training for Liberian National Police personnel and immigration and naturalization officers.

C. Adjustments of the Mission

16. Given the relative stability that has prevailed since the inauguration of the new Government and based on the detailed assessment provided in the tenth progress report on UNMIL (S/2006/159), which remains valid, one infantry battalion from Ethiopia was withdrawn from UNMIL on 17 December 2006. Following the departure of this battalion, the operational boundaries between sectors 1, 2 and 3 were realigned, which affected the deployment of troops in Margibi, Bong and Nimba Counties. Further adjustments, including the withdrawal of another infantry battalion, will be considered in 2007, security conditions permitting. Any further drawdown will be guided by progress made in the implementation of the UNMIL mandate and in meeting the benchmarks for consolidation, drawdown and withdrawal, which are set out in section V.

V. Status of implementation of the mandate of the Mission and the benchmarks for the consolidation, drawdown and withdrawal of the Mission

A. Training, restructuring and reform of the Liberian National Police

17. The restructuring and training of the Liberian National Police continued to make steady progress. To date, 2,610 Liberian National Police have been trained and deployed while 358 Special Security Services personnel and 210 Seaport Police officers have graduated from the National Police Academy. As at 1 March, 736 police recruits were receiving field training, while 184 were undergoing basic training. The Mission has intensified its recruitment efforts in order to achieve the target of 3,500 fully trained Liberian National Police personnel by July 2007.

18. In order to ensure the recruitment of qualified women into the police force, an educational support programme for female police candidates, funded by the Netherlands, was launched on 20 January. The programme, which is a joint initiative of the Government of Liberia and UNMIL, aims at improving the educational qualifications of women under the age of 35 years who are interested in joining the police force. Successful applicants will attend an intensive three-month programme to achieve a high school equivalency diploma. As at 1 March, 309 applications had been received.

19. In continuing efforts to further enhance the capacity of the Liberian National Police, the United Nations police are conducting in-service driver certification training for national police personnel, as well as job specific training for 32 officers of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and senior management courses for 39 officers.

20. The Government of Liberia has decided to establish, over the next five years, a 500-strong police quick-reaction force in addition to the 3,500 police personnel referred to in paragraph 17. This specialized unit, whose personnel will be drawn initially from the 200-strong Liberian National Police Support Unit, will have the capacity to respond quickly, efficiently and robustly to major breaches of internal security. A team of Liberian National Police officers and United Nations police

visited Sierra Leone on 26 January and Ghana on 8 February to draw lessons from the police quick reaction force in those countries.

21. The deployment of the Liberian National Police to the interior of the country continues to be hampered by the absence of basic infrastructure and the lack of police equipment, including vehicles and communications. Currently, 537 newly trained Liberian National Police personnel have been deployed to Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, River Cess, Maryland, Grand Kru and River Gee Counties. In addition, plans are under way to deploy police officers to all county headquarters and newly constructed police stations before December.

22. International partners continue to assist the Government in addressing the logistical challenges facing the police force, but further support from donors is required. On 11 December 2006, UNDP provided nine vehicles to the Liberian National Police. In addition, with bilateral assistance provided by the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and, through UNMIL quick-impact projects, three police stations at Zorzor in Lofa County, Greenville in Sinoe County and Zone 5/Depot 6 in Montserrado County were constructed and handed over to the Liberian National Police. The rehabilitation of the police stations at Bopolu in Gbarpolu County, Voinjama in Lofa County and Robertsport in Grand Cape Mount County are at advanced stages of completion. Some refurbishment work was also carried out at the Liberian National Police Headquarters in Monrovia. Furthermore, police stations are being reconstructed and rehabilitated in Kolahun and Foya in Lofa County, Yekepa and Tapeta in Nimba County, Arthington Town and Schefflin in Montserrado County, Sinje in Grand Cape Mount County, Unification Town in Margibi County, Morweh in River Cess County, Krowroeken in River Gee County, Owensgrove in Grand Bassa County, Salala in Bong County and Toe Town in Grand Gedeh County. In the meantime, the bids for the construction of new police stations at Buchanan in Grand Bassa County, Harper in Maryland County and Zwedru in Grand Gedeh County have been awarded. Notwithstanding these efforts, many more police facilities still need urgent rehabilitation.

B. Training, restructuring and reform of the armed forces of Liberia

23. The United States continues to lead the international support for the training and restructuring of the armed forces of Liberia. The first batch of 106 soldiers who graduated from basic training at the Barclays Training Centre in Monrovia in November 2006 is now undergoing advanced individual training, with 44 attending the basic non-commissioned officer course, 23 undergoing medical training and another 38 scheduled to begin other military occupational speciality training courses. Training for the second batch of recruits has been postponed from January to April. This delay is a cause for concern given that the rebuilding of Liberia's armed forces is a critical benchmark for the Mission's exit strategy. It would, therefore, be important to accelerate this programme.

C. Development of a national security strategy and architecture

24. President Johnson-Sirleaf has requested the Governance Reform Commission to conduct comprehensive national consultations on developing a national security strategy and architecture. The Commission has held several rounds of consultations with security agencies, Government bodies, international partners and civil society. The Commission's report is expected to be issued in early 2007, following which the Government will articulate its national security policy and architecture. In the meantime, UNMIL is working with the Government to establish a county network for security coordination and reporting.

D. Reintegration of ex-combatants

25. Completing the reintegration of the remaining caseload of ex-combatants remains a key factor in the UNMIL exit strategy. As at 1 March, some 75,000 out of 101,874 demobilized former combatants have either completed, are currently participating in or are registered for reintegration programmes. This includes 11,000 ex-combatants who signed up for formal education courses that started in November 2006, and 3,500 beneficiaries who registered for 8 new vocational skills training projects. Five of the training projects have commenced, while another three are expected to begin shortly. However, some 23,000 ex-combatants are still waiting to be provided with reintegration opportunities under bilaterally funded programmes, while 911 are waiting to be covered under the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Trust Fund managed by UNDP. The reintegration programme for children associated with the fighting forces, which is coordinated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has so far provided reintegration opportunities to 9,704 of the 11,000 child beneficiaries. This includes 4,967 children who have graduated or are currently participating in the community education investment programme and 4,737 beneficiaries who are undergoing or have graduated from vocational training.

26. UNMIL continued to actively collect and destroy residual weapons and ammunition that were voluntarily surrendered or discovered through search operations. Since the end of the disarmament and demobilization programme in 2005, 632 weapons, 77,504 rounds of ammunition, 1,187 pieces of unexploded ordnance and 11,674 assorted spares and miscellaneous parts have been collected and destroyed. In addition, the UNDP community arms collection for development programme has collected 240 rifles and guns, 20,830 rounds of ammunition, 598 magazines, bayonets and spares and 294 pieces of unexploded ordnance since its launch in January 2006.

E. Consolidation of State authority

27. Progress in the consolidation of State authority throughout the country remains slow. The county support teams, which were established by the international partners and the Government in each county, continue to assist in building the capacities of local authorities to assess, plan, coordinate and deliver basic services. The teams, which comprise representatives from UNMIL, the United Nations country team, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, county administration, Government line ministries and non-governmental institutions, meet on a monthly basis in each

of the 15 counties to develop action plans to address the needs of each county. The teams have developed long-term capacity-building strategies for all superintendents and assistant superintendents for development, and have agreed to assist in the rehabilitation of seven and construction of four administrative buildings in the counties, in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development. In the meantime, UNDP has donated vehicles to each county superintendent and assistant superintendent for development. Notwithstanding these efforts, the work of the county officials and Government line ministry representatives continues to be seriously hampered by a lack of communications, office equipment, accommodation, vehicles and good roads.

F. Management of natural resources

28. The Government continued to take action to regain control over and efficiently manage the country's natural resources for the benefit of the people of Liberia. Since the enactment of the new national forestry reform law, the Government has further developed legislation required for restarting large-scale commercial logging and, with the support of UNMIL, has embarked on a vigorous public sensitization campaign about this legislation. It is also in the process of recruiting a private company to manage the chain of custody system for forestry logs in accordance with the provisions of the new law. In the meantime, the United Kingdom Department for International Development has provided funding for the development of comprehensive legislation on community forestry, which should enable the Government to address the issues of community rights and benefits.

29. As part of its efforts to meet the requirements for the lifting of sanctions, the Government has applied to join the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and requested that a Kimberley Process review mission visit Liberia as soon as possible. With the support of UNMIL, the Government has completed the construction of a diamond office in Monrovia and regional diamond certification offices in six counties. Canada, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, as well as the De Beers diamond company are assisting the Government with the training of Liberia Diamond Authority personnel. The Government has also finalized an iron ore mining concession agreement with Acelor-Mittal, valued at $1 billion, which will pave the way for the reopening of the iron ore mines in Nimba County, as well as the rehabilitation of the Yekepa-Buchanan railroad and the Buchanan port.

30. UNMIL collaborated with the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy to finalize a sand mining policy, which provides for the establishment of sites that are suitable for sustainable sand mining. The policy is aimed at preventing coastal erosion, in particular in Monrovia, where illegal and indiscriminate sand mining has been taking place. UNMIL also assisted the Government in identifying and assessing potential sites for sand mining, while its force engineers are assisting in the rehabilitation of roads leading to these sites.

31. UNMIL continued to support the Government in re-establishing security in disputed rubber plantations within the framework of the joint Government of Liberia/UNMIL rubber plantation task force. Since the Government took control of the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in August 2006, the security situation on the plantation has remained stable, with UNMIL and the Liberian National Police

providing security for the management of the plantation. At Cocopa plantation, security remains a source of serious concern as conflicts persist between the plantation management and the local communities. UNMIL has deployed military and police personnel to support the Liberian National Police stationed at the plantation, where the use of shotguns is commonplace. In the meantime, the appointment by the Government of an interim management team for the Cocopa plantation in January has been legally challenged. The Government, in consultation with UNMIL, is also taking measures to address the security problems at the Sinoe rubber plantation.

G. Promotion of human rights and the rule of law

1. Promotion of human rights

32. During the reporting period, UNMIL continued its human rights promotion, protection and monitoring activities throughout the country. Although the overall human rights situation in the country continues to improve, major challenges remain, in particular in the area of prisons, the judiciary and the juvenile justice system. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also continues to be hampered by mismanagement and financial constraints.

33. Very weak rule of law institutions continue to impede the administration of justice. The judicial system lacks qualified personnel, infrastructure, logistic support and basic office supplies. Court officials often apply legal rules and procedures in an inconsistent manner or fail to observe minimum human rights standards. In addition, corrupt practices involving some magistrates and judicial officials, inefficiency and prolonged pre-trial detention continued to be observed throughout the country. Despite denunciations by the Ministry of Justice, the practice of trial by ordeal remains common in some remote areas of the country, in part because of the absence of courts and police services. In an effort to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary, the Government has provided 20 vehicles for the use of circuit court judges across the country.

34. Detention conditions are still below minimum human rights standards. Some correction facilities, including the Monrovia Central Prison, are overcrowded because of delays in bringing cases to trial. As a result of staff shortages and poor working conditions, the number of jailbreaks increased during the reporting period.

35. Although there has been an increase in the number of rape cases tried by the circuit courts, the relevant provisions of the Rape Amendment Act are still not being uniformly applied by magistrates and judges. In addition, many cases are not being investigated or brought before competent courts.

36. The juvenile justice system remains a source of serious concern. In several counties, juveniles continued to be held in long-term pre-trial detention with adults without indictment or trial, while in other counties, juveniles have been tried by the magistrate courts.

37. The orphanages that were declared illegal and listed for closure by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in 2006 continued to operate. Conditions in these unaccredited homes are below the minimum standard required for the healthy development of children and their protection from exploitation.

38. Since my previous report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has not made much headway in implementing its mandate. Although some progress was made in the identification and recruitment of key staff, a numbers of posts remain vacant. In addition, the only member of the International Technical Advisory Committee who was resident in Liberia resigned his appointment. The Commission's operations are hampered by financial and logistical constraints, as well as by shortcomings in its management. Donors recently rejected the draft budget prepared by the Commission because of concerns about lack of transparency in the previous disbursement of funds. In an effort to resolve these problems, on 23 January, the International Contact Group on Liberia wrote to the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to recommend the establishment of a working group, to be composed of representatives, of the Contact Group, including the United Nations, and the Commission. The Chairman has since agreed to the establishment of the working group, but with a larger membership. The first meeting of the working group was to take place on 8 March. In the meantime, the Commission's plans to commence public hearings in Monrovia have been suspended.

39. During the reporting period, some progress was made towards the establishment of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights. On 17 January, the Independent Selection Panel, which was established to vet nominees, submitted a short-list of candidates to the President for consideration. Owing to the delay in the vetting and selection process, UNMIL was unable to proceed with planned activities, including training of the Commissioners and staff members in human rights law and investigation.

2. Support for the judicial system

40. During the reporting period, the number of trials for serious offences such as murder, rape and armed robbery increased. The first rape case to be tried since the end of the conflict was concluded in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, and several high-profile corruption cases involving several former senior Government officials were prosecuted. This increase in judicial activity was partially due to the engagement of national lawyers, with UNMIL support, to serve as prosecutors and public defenders. The Minister of Justice and the Chief Justice have since requested that the lawyers be engaged for a further six months. Despite these developments, the justice system continues to be constrained by the lack of court buildings and a dearth of qualified judicial and legal officers, which have resulted in serious delays in the processing of criminal cases.

41. UNMIL continued its capacity-building activities by providing training for legal and judicial officers. Since May 2006, 330 magistrates have been trained by UNMIL. The Mission is currently assisting the Chief Justice in identifying the training needs of circuit court judges and other judicial personnel. Meanwhile, the Governance Reform Commission has prepared a draft paper on legal and judicial reforms required in the justice sector.

3. Support for the corrections system

42. UNMIL continued to assist the Bureau of Rehabilitation and Corrections to improve the conditions of correctional facilities throughout the country. The refurbishment work on the facilities, being funded by Norway and the United States, is at various stages of completion. The construction of a new cell block at the Monrovia Central Prison is also in the final stages of completion, while the first phase of the refurbishment of the National Palace of Corrections in Zwedru and the rehabilitation of the Bondiway Prison have been completed. In collaboration with UNMIL, the Government is in the process of reviewing the security and logistical needs of the Zwedru facility. In addition, with the assistance of the UNMIL quick-impact project funds, the refurbishment of the Buchanan Prison has been completed while the rehabilitation of the facilities in Voinjama and Sanniquellie is ongoing. The World Food Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross and other partners continued to provide foodstuff and other supplies to the prisoners.

43. Since the training programme for corrections officers commenced in February 2005, UNMIL has trained 79 corrections officers. During the reporting period, 25 correction officers completed their basic training at the Police Academy and are currently undergoing practical training at correctional facilities. UNMIL has also provided these officers with training in HIV/AIDS, gender mainstreaming, fire safety and equipment and first aid.

44. Owing to budgetary constraints, the Government has only absorbed 25 of the 79 newly trained corrections officers into the civil service. However, in response to the frequent incidents of escape from prisons, which have been attributed to an acute shortage of trained corrections officers, President Johnson-Sirleaf has recently committed to absorbing 55 corrections officers into the civil service in 2007, and to ensuring better conditions of service for corrections staff. The Government has also procured new uniforms for these officers.

H. Economic governance

45. The Government continued to make steady progress in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme. The Economic Governance Steering Committee met regularly to monitor progress in the implementation of the Programme. It also continued to review the monthly status reports on the activities of the internationally recruited experts. During the period under review, the Senate confirmed the Government's nominee for the position of Auditor-General at the General Auditing Commission, which is being funded by the European Commission. A non-governmental organization was selected to conduct a nationwide campaign, sponsored by the World Bank, to raise awareness about the Programme. In addition, the Government, in collaboration with international partners, completed an internal review of the implementation of the Programme after its first year of operation and released a status report, which was published on the Programme's website (www.gemapliberia.org). The progress highlighted in the report includes improvements in Government financial management and expenditure, as well as increased transparency in the management of State-owned enterprises.

46. The Contracts and Concessions Review Committee of the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission completed its review of 186 contracts and

concessions entered into by the National Transitional Government of Liberia by the 31 December 2006 deadline established by President Johnson-Sirleaf. A local lawyer and an international lawyer provided by UNMIL conducted legal reviews of 23 of these contracts. Of the 186 contracts reviewed, the Committee recommended the acceptance of 52, the renegotiation of 14 and the cancellation of 29. The Committee was unable to examine 3 telecommunications agreements and 44 lease agreements because of the absence of technical experts, while another 44 contracts from different sectors could not be comprehensively reviewed because of missing documentation. At a meeting of the Steering Committee on 24 January, the President instructed that the three telecommunications agreements should be nullified for violating Government procurement procedures and laws.

47. The Government's commitment to improving economic governance continued to yield positive results. According to the Ministry of Finance, the Government realized $114 million in revenue in 2006, which represented a 48 per cent increase from the $77 million collected in the previous year. This marked improvement resulted from the fiscal reforms and regulatory measures adopted by the Government.

I. National recovery, reconstruction and development

48. On 13 February, the Government of Liberia convened a Liberia Partners' Forum to review progress made on its recovery and reconstruction agenda, as well as to solicit feedback on the strategic priorities outlined in its interim poverty reduction strategy and discuss financing requirements and mechanisms. The Forum, which took place in Washington, D.C., was sponsored by the African Development Bank (ADB), the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, the World Bank and the United States. During the Forum, Germany and the United States pledged to forgive Liberia's bilateral debt, while the United Kingdom agreed to provide 10 per cent of the funds needed to clear Liberia's arrears with ADB. Other international partners promised to support the Government's efforts to eliminate its external debt. I encourage the international community to translate the tremendous goodwill expressed at the Forum into tangible resources that could be used to address the priority needs of the country.

49. During a one-day visit to Liberia, on 1 February, President Hu Jintao of China signed a number of bilateral economic agreements with the Government and announced the cancellation of Liberia's US$ 10 million dollars debt. In addition, President Hu gave Liberia a $1.5 million cash grant and pledged $25 million to the country over the next two years.

50. Employment generation remains a key priority of the Government. A joint initiative of UNDP, UNMIL and the World Bank, aimed at rehabilitating critical roads, has so far provided short-term employment opportunities for some 5,700 workers, including ex-combatants. In addition, some 768 community members and ex-combatants have benefited from the rehabilitation of secondary and feeder roads by UNMIL military engineers. With the support of the WFP food support to local initiatives programme and the Ministry of Public Works, UNMIL has also facilitated the employment of some 3,000 local community members in roadside brushing and other basic road repair works. Moreover, the Mission has facilitated the establishment of three manual quarry projects for the production of stones used for

road rehabilitation, which has provided jobs for about 350 people. UNMIL also continues to use its quick-impact projects to enhance employment creation.

VI. Humanitarian situation

51. Further improvement was recorded in the humanitarian situation during the reporting period. As at 1 March, 89,344 refugees had voluntarily returned to their places of origin with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, while some 36,000 were reported to have returned spontaneously. This leaves some 107,348 refugees still to be repatriated from various countries in the subregion. There are also 16,168 refugees residing in Liberia from Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and other countries. Meanwhile, the humanitarian community has reviewed its contingency plans for responding to any possible humanitarian emergency that may arise as a result of the fragile political and security situation in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

52. During the period under review, the number of functioning health facilities increased from 280 to 389. Despite this improvement, access to basic health care remains inadequate, in particular in remote counties. The majority of health-care facilities are being operated by non-governmental organizations, some of which plan to cease operations in Liberia later in 2007. The Government's efforts to deliver adequate health care have continued to be constrained by limited resources and the dearth of qualified health personnel.

53. To date, the 2006 United Nations consolidated appeal for Liberia has received 50 per cent of the estimated $145 million required for humanitarian activities. Some $117 million will be needed to address humanitarian needs in 2007, including the delivery of basic social services, the provision of security and productive livelihoods for returnee communities and strengthening the capacity of civil society and local authorities. I appeal to donors to generously provide the required assistance to meet these needs, which are outlined in the 2007 Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Liberia.

VII. Gender

54. The Mission's Gender Adviser Unit continued to facilitate the development of a mission-wide action plan, with benchmarks, for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Through its membership in various committees and working groups, the Unit gave technical, logistical and financial support for the implementation of a national action plan in the areas of rule of law, the protection of human rights and the promotion of women in decision-making. During the reporting period, the United Nations Gender Theme Group, which is comprised of representatives of the United Nations country team, including UNMIL, developed an action plan to support the Government in elaborating its national strategy on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the development of a gender policy and the preparation of a report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Liberia. The Unit also conducted gender analysis training for UNMIL personnel.

VIII. HIV/AIDS

55. The UNMIL HIV/AIDS Unit collaborated with the Mission's integrated training cell to conduct awareness training and sensitization, as well as personal risk assessment sessions, as part of the induction training for military, police and civilian personnel. The Unit also continued to promote HIV/AIDS awareness through its participation in a live UNMIL Radio phone-in programme. In addition, it collaborated with UNICEF, the Foundation for International Dignity, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Right to Play organization to conduct awareness workshops on HIV/AIDS for youths residing in Montserrado County.

IX. Personnel conduct and discipline

56. The Mission's Conduct and Discipline Unit continued to focus on developing strategies to prevent, identify, report on and effectively respond to all categories of United Nations personnel misconduct. It also focused on strategies to ensure the implementation of the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse through training, awareness-raising and attention to welfare concerns of all categories of United Nations personnel. In 2006, the Mission trained 3,360 personnel in conduct-related issues, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, UNMIL hired a local consultant to conduct awareness training for 30 national non-governmental organizations, which are expected to participate in the implementation of the Mission's outreach programmes to local communities close to United Nations facilities. The Unit has also continued to participate in coordinating the national sexual exploitation and abuse awareness campaign launched by the Government in December 2006.

57. During the period under review, seven allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were reported. All reported cases are being investigated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. UNMIL will continue to publicize the outcome of completed investigations.

X. Public information

58. The public information component of UNMIL continued to support the priority programmes of the Mission, as well as those of the United Nations agencies, the Government of Liberia and civil society, which are aimed at consolidating peace and stability, encouraging reconciliation and promoting national recovery. The Mission also organized several sports and cultural events to promote national reconciliation. The sports for peace programme, which is expected to bring Liberians throughout the country together to play football, volleyball and kickball, was launched on 2 March by my Special Adviser on Sports for Development and Peace, Adolf Ogi. UNMIL also organized a musical concert in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, to sensitize the populace about sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission has also continued to work with other partners in developing the capacity of the national media by providing training for print and electronic media personnel.

XI. Observations

59. Liberia continues to make steady progress in consolidating peace, stability and democracy, as well as in promoting economic recovery, with the sustained support of its international partners. I am pleased to note that the Government remains focused on the important priorities of ensuring economic recovery; fighting corruption; implementing the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program; reforming the security sector; regaining control and efficient management of its natural resources; strengthening the capacity of its institutions, parastatals and agencies; and consolidating its authority. In addition, the Government has implemented structural and fiscal reforms; drafted critical legislation; and transparently reviewed contracts and concessions entered into by the former National Transitional Government of Liberia.

60. Notwithstanding these encouraging developments, Liberia still faces significant reconstruction and development challenges arising from 14 years of civil strife, including pervasive poverty, food insecurity, high unemployment, massive illiteracy, debilitated infrastructure and the inadequate delivery of basic services, including potable water, health services and education. In addition, a number of tasks that are critical to the consolidation of peace in the country have yet to be completed, including the reintegration of ex-combatants, the resettlement of returnees, the reform of the judiciary and the extension of the rule of law throughout the country.

61. The Government also needs to accelerate the development of a national security strategy and framework, as well as the training and restructuring of the new army. While some progress has been made in restructuring and training the police, vehicles, communications equipment and accommodation are needed to sustain their deployment to the interior of the country. I trust that donors will contribute generously towards these pressing requirements, which will help the Government to strengthen the rule of law.

62. The potential threat to stability presented by the unemployed, including former combatants and deactivated security personnel, remains a source of serious concern. To address this threat, labour-intensive employment opportunities must be provided in the short term, while sustainable employment opportunities generated through a revitalized economy will need to be created in the long term. I appeal to donors to assist the Government in generating these employment opportunities. I also urge international partners to intensify efforts to provide former combatants, who have not yet participated in reintegration programmes, with reintegration opportunities.

63. The positive expressions of support by international partners during the Liberia Partners' Forum were very encouraging. I was particularly gratified by the commitment made towards helping the Government find solutions to clear its debts with international financial institutions. It is hoped that the partners will follow through on these commitments so that Liberia's multilateral debt arrears can be cleared in a timely manner.

64. In my address to the Liberia Partners' Forum, I stressed the importance of assisting the Government in building the capacity of its State institutions and in restoring effective State administration of the country's natural resources so that the remaining sanctions may be lifted. In providing our collective support to meet these

and other urgent priorities, it will be important to protect the fundamental human rights of every Liberian, promote gender equality and foster national reconciliation.

65. It is a matter of concern that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is progressing rather slowly owing to a number of management, personnel and budgetary challenges. These problems need to be resolved on an urgent basis so that the Commission can continue its valuable work of ensuring lasting peace in Liberia. I would like to express appreciation to the international partners who have so far provided assistance to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and appeal to them to continue to work closely with the Commission in the implementation of its mandate.

66. The recent tensions in the House of Representatives have diverted the attention of legislators away from the very crucial national reconstruction and recovery work of the country. Members of the House should work constructively together to overcome these difficulties and to settle all disputes within the appropriate legal frameworks.

67. At the same time, it is important to continue to pay attention to the potential external threats to peace and stability in Liberia. In particular, the unpredictable situations in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea create an environment that poses additional challenges to efforts to build sustained stability in Liberia. The ongoing cooperation between UNMIL and UNOCI, as well as with the Sierra Leonean and Guinean armed forces, in patrolling the border areas needs to be complemented by commensurate policies at the highest political levels to promote good neighbourly relations and build mechanisms for stability in the border areas and the wider subregion. I am therefore greatly encouraged by the growing cooperation among the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in addressing these border issues.

68. In the light of the challenges outlined above, and given the limited progress made in meeting the benchmarks for the consolidation and drawdown of the Mission, I recommend the extension of the mandate of UNMIL for a period of 12 months, until 31 March 2008.

69. In conclusion, I would like to commend the people and Government of Liberia, my Special Representative, Alan Doss, and all UNMIL military and civilian personnel for the progress made in the country during the reporting period. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, humanitarian organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as international and local non-governmental organizations, for their important contributions and support to the peace consolidation process in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength (at 1 March 2007)

	Military				
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Argentina					8
Bangladesh	17	12	3 183	3 212	29
Benin	4	1		5	
Bolivia	1	1		2	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				0	11
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	8	557	570	18
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	5
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	4	1		5	
El Salvador	3			3	2
Ethiopia	14	7	2 536	2 557	
Egypt	8			8	4
Fiji				0	30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5			5	32
Germany			18	18	5
Ghana	10	4	847	861	40
India					125
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		6	396	402	
Jamaica				0	8
Jordan	8	7	115	130	140
Kenya	1	3		4	26
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	19
Mali	2	1		3	
Moldova	3	1		4	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	3	857	863	6
Nepal	3	2	40	45	256
Niger	1			1	

	Military				
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Civilian police*
Nigeria	19	14	1 943	1 976	157
Norway				0	10
Pakistan	16	9	2 732	2 757	28
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	3		6	
Philippines	3	5	164	172	28
Poland	2			2	3
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	10
Rwanda					15
Samoa				0	14
Senegal	3	3	600	606	
Serbia	6			6	7
Sri Lanka				0	10
Sweden	0	4	231	235	12
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia					1
Togo	2	1		3	
Turkey				0	33
Uganda				0	21
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland		3		3	
Ukraine	3	1	300	304	13
Uruguay				0	3
United States of America	7	6		13	7
Yemen				0	4
Zambia	3			3	27
Zimbabwe				0	31
Total	**196**	**117**	**14 519**	**14 832**	**1 201**

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Located in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the Military Guard Force (MGF) company of the Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL) has been under UNMIL command since 1 December 2005.
UNMIL
Deployment
March 2007
Sector boundary
International boundary
Provincial boundary
National capital
Airport
Main road
Railroad
0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi
SIERRA LEONE
LIBERIA
GUINEA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
Atlantic Ocean
Monrovia
Sector 1
Sector 2
Sector 3
Sector 4
MONTSERRADO
GBARPOLU
LOFA
BONG
NIMBA
MARGIBI
GRAND BASSA
RIVER CESS
GRAND GEDEH
SINOE
RIVER GEE
GRAND KRU
MARYLAND
UNMIL HQ
IRELAND & SWEDEN (Quick Reaction Force)
MONGOLIA (SCSL - Freetown)
PHILIPPINES
BANGLADESH (Force Reserve)
CHINA
NEPAL
JORDAN
NIGERIA
NAMIBIA
PAKISTAN
UKRAINE
BANGLADESH
ETHIOPIA
SENEGAL
OTHER DEPLOYMENT
Winsue
Phebe
Totota
Salala
Gbopolu
CAMP SCHEIFFELIN
Camp Scheiffelin
Map No. 4211 Rev. 14 UNITED NATIONS
March 2007 (Colour)
Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section